

VZCZCXRO9470
RR RUEHBZ RUEHGI RUEHMA
DE RUEHYD #1116/01 2551134
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 121134Z SEP 07 ZDK CTG NUMEROUS SVCS
FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8133
INFO RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 0548
RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI 0165
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0048
RUEHBZ/AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE 0064
RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI 0038
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0984
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 1572
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1651
RUEHMA/AMEMBASSY MALABO 0252
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0130
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0046
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1915
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0098
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 YAOUNDE 001116

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE ALSO FOR OES ELLEN SHAW
KINSHASA FOR JOHN FLYNN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAID](#) [KCOR](#) [ECON](#) [CM](#)

SUBJECT: FORMER CANADIAN PM ON CONGO BASIN VISIT, ENDS UP
TALKING CORRUPTION, GOVERNANCE

REF: YAOUNDE 1071

YAOUNDE 00001116 001.2 OF 002

MARKED PARAGRAPHS ARE SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED (SBU). NOT
FOR DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE THE USG.

11. (SBU) Summary. Former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin visited Cameroon September 9-12 on a familiarization trip in his new role as a co-chair (with Kenyan Minister and Noble Laureate Wangari Maathai) of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP). In a meeting where donor representatives told him millions of dollars in aid were already going to the forestry sector and decried a system wracked by corruption, Martin concluded: "We will not do this within the existing structures (of forestry concessions). If Cameroon will not reform the system, we will skip Cameroon and focus on the Democratic Republic of the Congo." Martin said he would seek to contact senior leadership in Washington, mentioning specifically National Security Advisor Hadley, to advocate a greater U.S. role in the initiative. End Summary.

12. (U) Explaining that UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown asked him to co-chair the CBFP and guide the allocation of about \$100 million in UK assistance to the project, Martin said his first visit to the region was aimed at meeting the Government of Cameroon (GRC) officials, private companies, communities, NGOs, and donors involved in the forestry sector. In a September 11 meeting with representatives from the donor community, Martin made two points regarding the CBFP: first, that the international community is prepared to pay in order to protect "one of the world's two biggest lungs, but not to enrich a select few within these countries"; and second, that an anticipated change (with a new administration of either party) in the U.S. position on global warming will trigger the installation of carbon trading schemes and unleash untold resources on the region. If these resources come to the region under the current governance regimes, Martin predicted, small groups of people would make vast fortunes, but the people of the Congo Basin would not benefit.

¶3. (SBU) Accusing the GRC of mismanaging the financial windfall from debt relief and citing the GRC's Forestry and Wildlife Minister's recent estimate that more than \$100 million in forestry revenues has been foregone because of corruption and bad governance (reftel), the German Ambassador asked why donors should "replace" the money mismanaged by the GRC. The Canadian High Commissioner agreed, arguing that donors bear some blame for continuing to underwrite the current forestry structures despite the persistence of blatant mismanagement and malfeasance. More than money, he argued, donors need to apply "constant, serious political pressure" for an overhaul of the system. The Italian Ambassador explained that although Italy provides negligible assistance to the sector, Italian logging companies are heavily implicated, and that the buy-in of the private sector will be critical for any reform effort. The French, Canadian, German and Italian Ambassadors and former PM Martin expressed agreement that the current system of logging concessions lies at the heart of the problems of corruption and bad governance.

¶4. (SBU) In concluding the discussion, Martin said he did not "want to be the subject of a UK Parliamentary inquiry in the year 2020 asking me where all this money went. We will not do this within the existing structures (of forestry concessions). If Cameroon will not reform the system, we will skip Cameroon and focus on the Democratic Republic of the Congo."

¶5. (SBU) After the discussion, Martin stressed to us that high-level USG engagement was critical to the success of the CBFP. Martin said he would seek to contact senior leadership in Washington, mentioning specifically National Security Advisor Hadley, to advocate a greater U.S. role in the initiative.

YAOUNDE 00001116 002.2 OF 002

NELSON